



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271
www.dnr.illinois.gov

Pat Quinn, Governor
Marc Miller, Director

December 12, 2012

Mr. Dan Bromberek
Director, Public Works
Village of Romeoville
13 Montrose Lane
Romeoville, IL 60446

RE: Illinois Rt. 53/Material Service Road Intersection Improvements, Will County
Endangered Species Consultation Program
EcoCAT Review #1306371

Dear Mr. Bromberek:

The Department received this proposed action from Robinson Engineering, Ltd., for consultation with the Village of Romeoville in accordance with the *Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act* [520 ILCS 10/11], the *Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act* [525 ILCS 30/17], and Title 17 *Illinois Administrative Code* Part 1075.

It is the opinion of the Department the proposed action is unlikely to adversely modify the **Material Services Prairie INAI Site**, the **Romeoville Prairie INAI Site**, or the **Romeoville Prairie Illinois Nature Preserve**; or to adversely modify the essential habitat of the **Spotted Turtle** or the **Hine's Emerald Dragonfly**.

*However, it is the Department's opinion the proposed action is likely to temporarily adversely modify essential habitat of the state-listed endangered **Blanding's Turtle** in that construction activities may obstruct, impede, intercept, or trap female Blanding's Turtles and/or their offspring as they move to and from nesting areas.*

While they spend most of their time in water, the Blanding's Turtle is classified as "semi-aquatic." Gravid females may travel up to a mile into upland areas in order to nest, and hatchlings must traverse that distance back to wetlands. As recently as June 2008, a pregnant female Blanding's Turtle was killed on Rt. 53, at a point one thousand feet north of this intersection, as she attempted to cross the highway into upland areas west of the highway. This occurred at a point where the wetlands associated with the Des Plaines River most closely approach the bluff crest, but it is likely that individuals of this species historically ascended the bluff all along this section of the river valley, including the area of the proposed action near Romeoville High School, where abundant upland nesting habitat remains available to this species.

This medium-sized turtle cannot scale a vertical surface greater than six inches in height. Thus, curbs and open excavations can entrap Turtles, which tend to follow a direct line of march toward their objectives. Depending on general weather conditions, nesting may begin as early as late May during warm springs or as late as July or August in very cool years. Nestlings hatch between 60 and 90 days after deposit, so that hatchlings may be moving toward wetland habitats from mid-July to as late as early November. Farther north, hatchlings sometimes remain in the nest over the winter, but this rarely happens in Illinois, if ever.

The Department recommends that the entire perimeter of the construction area should be screened with properly-installed silt-fencing to prevent the entrance of Turtles into the construction area. Turtles encountering the fence will follow it to its terminus, when they will attempt to resume their line of travel. Since this would simply direct them into the traffic on Rt. 53, the Department recommends that the fence terminals should be curved back toward the center of the project and end in a simple pitfall trap between six and eight inches deep. These need be no larger than a square yard. The traps should be inspected each morning to identify any wildlife which has entered the trap and could not escape. Any animal other than a Blanding's Turtle may be released. Animals left in the trap over daylight hours may suffer desiccation or heat stroke, so it is important the traps be checked and emptied daily.

Blanding's Turtles can be easily identified by their solid yellow chin and throat. *If a Blanding's Turtle is captured in this way, the trap should be shaded and officials of the Department of Natural Resources [Dan Kirk, (630) 553-1372] of the Forest Preserve District of Will County should be notified to remove the Turtle. Only individuals authorized by the Department should handle a suspected Blanding's Turtle.*

This procedure will protect individual Turtles from harm associated with the construction project should they attempt to cross Rt. 53 within the construction limits. If Blanding's Turtles are captured in this way, it will result in the collection of important information regarding nesting areas and local population demographics.

Consultation on the part of the Department is terminated, unless the village of Romeoville desires additional information or advice related to this proposal. In accordance with 17 Ill. Adm. Code 1075.40(h), the Village must notify the Department of its decision regarding these recommendations, whether it will:

- Proceed with the action as originally proposed;
- Require the action to be modified per Department recommendations (please specify which measures if not all will be required); or
- Forgo the action.

This consultation is valid for two years unless new information becomes available which was not previously considered; or the proposed action is modified; or additional species, essential habitats, or Natural Areas are identified in the vicinity. If the project has not been implemented within two years of the date of this letter, or any of the above listed conditions develop, a new consultation is necessary.

The natural resource review primarily reflects the information existing in the Illinois Natural Heritage Database at the time of this consultation, and should not be regarded as a final statement on the site

being considered, nor should it be a substitute for detailed site surveys or field surveys required for environmental assessments.

If additional protected resources are encountered during the project's implementation, the applicant must comply with the applicable statutes and regulations. Also, note that termination does not imply IDNR's authorization or endorsement of the proposed action. Please contact me if you have questions regarding this review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Keith M. Shank". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Keith" and last name "Shank" clearly legible, and "M." as a middle initial.

Keith M. Shank
Impact Assessment Section
Division of Ecosystems and Environment
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(217) 785-5500

cc: William P. Dolan, Robinson Engineering, Ltd.